

# News Release

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## THE CONSERVATION FUND

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### PARTNERS FINALIZE AGREEMENT TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES HABITAT - REACHING CONSERVATION GOAL AND ENABLING FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH *Conservation of 9,117-Acre Tract Key to Riverside County's "Blueprint for Tomorrow"*

Arlington, VA (January 2, 2004) – Marking a triumph for balanced conservation and smart growth, a diverse partnership that includes The Conservation Fund, Lockheed Martin Corporation, the State of California, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Riverside County, announced today the protection of 9,117 acres of endangered species habitat in Riverside County, one of the nation's fastest growing areas. Identified as a top conservation priority in the county's land use plan entitled "Blueprint for Tomorrow," the project preserves important open space and provides for appropriate future development.

Riverside County's Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA) committed \$5.5 million toward the purchase of the property. The State's Wildlife Conservation Board negotiated the purchase and approved more than \$12 million from The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contributed \$8 million to protect threatened and endangered species. The Conservation Fund was instrumental in identifying and bringing together funding sources.

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The State agreed to acquire the property from Lockheed Martin at a significant discount using Federal, State and RCHCA funds. The State also agreed to hold a conservation easement on about 565 acres in an area of known contamination. The land will be transferred to the State after Lockheed Martin completes environmental remediation activities on that parcel.

“Thanks to the leadership of Riverside County, the support of the State of California and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the commitment of Lockheed Martin, we are conserving important wildlife habitat in one of the fastest growing areas in the country,” said Larry Selzer, president of The Conservation Fund. “This public-private partnership demonstrates the extraordinary results that can be achieved when corporations and public agencies work together to find balanced conservation solutions.”

The newly acquired property will be known as the Potrero Creek Conservation Unit and will become an addition to the California Department of Fish and Game’s San Jacinto Wildlife Area.

"I recently toured this property in Riverside County," said California Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. “This is a wonderful opportunity for the State to preserve open space for wildlife."

Al Wright, executive director of the Wildlife Conservation Board said, “This acquisition concludes more than ten years of public interest to protect this critically important habitat for Federal and State listed populations of the Stephens’ kangaroo rat and 30 other species of concern. The Potrero Creek Conservation Unit will provide the core holding for future acquisitions in partnership with the California Department of Parks and Recreation and Riverside County, to protect additional habitat while providing recreational opportunities on adjacent properties.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed.

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“This acquisition includes core habitat for other ‘live-in’ wildlife, including the bobcat, cactus wren, loggerhead shrike and Bell’s sage sparrow. Moreover, the conservation and management of this high quality land in the Badlands will contribute to wildlife movement north of the San Jacinto Mountains,” said Jim Bartel, Field Supervisor of the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office.

Riverside County Board of Supervisors Chairman John Tavaglione praised the cooperation that developed during several years of negotiations among governmental leaders, the private sector and conservation groups.

"This land is one of the crucial pieces in the puzzle," Tavaglione said. "It is critical to the overall habitat plan."

The fourth largest county in California, Riverside has experienced explosive growth, and its population is expected to double to 3 million in the next two decades. Although it abuts the sprawling edges of Los Angeles and San Diego, Riverside County also contains more than 7,200 square miles of river valleys, deserts, mountains and plains. To protect these natural resources, as well as its threatened and endangered species, the county has developed a comprehensive conservation plan for western Riverside County. A plan is also being developed for the Coachella Valley. These smart growth strategies will provide for the protection of important wildlife habitat, including the Lockheed property, while supporting local economic growth and development needs.

“These thousands of acres of grassland, sage scrub and riparian forest are an ecological gem, and a cornerstone of the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The Potrero Valley acquisition shows that the State, Federal and local governments are all stepping forward to meet their obligations under the plan,” said Dan Silver, executive director of the Endangered Habitats League.

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Lockheed Martin Corporation owned the property since the 1960s using approximately 150 acres as a rocket motor testing facility. As a result of the testing, a portion of the soils and groundwater were impacted with trichloroethylene and perchlorates. The majority of the land has been used as a buffer and open space area. With the property no longer a strategic asset, Lockheed Martin officials contacted The Conservation Fund to facilitate the sale. Through its property disposition service, The Conservation Fund works with the private sector across the country to find balanced solutions for surplus real estate assets.

“We believe this is a win-win situation for everyone,” said Gail Rymer, Lockheed Martin spokesperson. “This land will help preserve vital habitat, key open space and a wildlife corridor for generations to come. Lockheed Martin agreed to sell the property below fair market value to enable the local, State and Federal government agencies to meet their missions of conservation. These agencies also benefit from Lockheed Martin recording a conservation easement on the land the corporation retained to allow it to continue to aggressively perform its remaining environmental investigation and remediation activities in accordance with a State managed program while ensuring the land’s future as open space.”

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation reported 2002 sales of \$26.6 billion.

The Conservation Fund, the top rated environmental organization by the American Institute of Philanthropy, acts to protect the nation's legacy of land and water resources in partnership with other organizations, public agencies, foundations, corporations and individuals. Seeking innovative conservation solutions for the 21st century, the Fund works to integrate economic and environmental goals. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped to protect wildlife habitat, greenways, community “greenspace” and historic sites totaling more than 3.5 million acres throughout the nation.

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